Joint statement on Open Access

We represent 20 learned societies in the arts and humanities, with over 15,000 members who are scholars and teachers across the full range of arts and humanities subjects. We support Open Access to publicly-funded research. We urge RCUK and HEFCE to recognize that in order to preserve academic freedom and quality different disciplines require different forms of Open Access. The humanities disciplines are distinctive in a number of ways:

- our journals are relatively expensive to produce and cheap to buy;
- our early-career researchers do not work in teams with senior researchers and often do not have institutional support at all;
- much of our most significant work is published in book form and OA models for these products are in their infancy;
- our IP is not protected by patent and mostly consists of prose that is the creative product of its author;
- the half-lives of our works tend to be longer;
- we are often dependent on third-party material for the presentation and elaboration of our own work;
- much of our work (especially for those who work on other cultures than our own) is published internationally in environments very different from the UK.

For these and other reasons we support:

- parity between Green and Gold OA models;
- embargo periods that will support moderately-priced journals that can provide extensive peer review and editorial work; 36 months (the established embargo period on JSTOR) would be a safe starting point, but if evidence shows that humanities journals in a largely OA regime can sustain existing levels of quality with shorter embargo periods then this term could be progressively reduced;
- greater transparency in humanities publishing, with regular statements from learned societies about the costs and benefits of their journals and the purposes to which any surpluses are directed;
- licenses (such as CCBY NC ND) which permit free dissemination of our work and in the case of reuse make an explicit distinction between the original work and any alterations;
- a repository policy that recognizes that many humanities scholars will have no UK institutional base at the time of publication (even if they are later submitted to the REF);
- a repository policy that specifies the formatted and edited publication, identical to the print and online versions supplied by the publisher, to ensure stability of citation and reference over the long shelf-life of our work, where it is not so much the ‘data’ or findings as a specific form of words that counts;
- exceptions from OA requirements for international publications that may not conform to UK funders’ stipulations;
- exceptions from OA requirements where third-party material is essential to the presentation and elaboration of our own work;
- exceptions from OA requirements for publications in books, until such time as there is evidence that business models supporting peer review and extensive editorial work on books are sufficiently established and diffused.
Architectural Humanities Research Association
Association of University Professors and Heads of French
British Association for American Studies
British Association for Korean Studies
British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies
British Philosophical Association
Council for British Archaeology
Council for College and University English
Economic History Society
English Association
The Folklore Society
Hellenic Society
Linguistics Association of Great Britain
Mind Association
Philological Society
Royal Archaeological Institute
Royal Historical Society
Society for Caribbean Studies
Subject Committee for Archaeology
University Council for Modern Languages

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